

THE QUIVER

Saturday, November 4, 1865.



"Beside him was a woman, tall and graceful."—99.

THE GHOST OF CASTELNEAU COURT.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

YES; the tray had disappeared. "It is as I supposed, then," I said. "Some dishonest servant has been playing off his pranks to frighten us away; and he has made his escape through the

Gothic Hall, and taken the dog with him." I took the candle in my hand and walked towards the door; the bolt was still fastened on this side, as old Franklin had fastened it six hours before.

The thief, whoever he was, had not quitted the room by either of the doors, nor by the windows, for the shutters were as firmly barred as ever!

I hope I shall not be accounted very superstitious if I acknowledge that at that moment the ghost of Lady Clarissa Castelneau took possession of my mind. The unaccountable entrance and disappearance, the faint rustling of her dress, the utter darkness of the room when I returned, all recurred to me, and an indescribable misgiving as nearly approaching to dread of the supernatural as I had ever felt took possession of me.

As the marauder had not left the room openly, it followed that there must be some secret means of egress; some secret door or sliding panel in the polished oak wainscoting that lined the walls. I searched the different panels curiously, but amidst their varied but solid carving I could find no trace of any such opening. I endeavoured, by knocking, to ascertain if the sound indicated any hollow space behind, but I could make nothing out by my investigations. Foiled, hot, and weary, I gave up the search, determining to open the campaign again the next day. I went to my own room, therefore, but not for a long time to sleep.

The next morning offered no opportunity for sport, even had we been so inclined during Lord Castelneau's absence, for it rained heavily. My mind was busy with the oak-panelled room and its mystery, and during the night, I had resolved I would thoroughly investigate the matter.

After breakfast, I drew Mason aside, and communicated to him my experiences of the preceding night, the repetition of the groan, and the disappearance of the dog and the tray. I then told him my wish to mount guard in the oak room that day, and, if possible, discover the authors and machinery of the plot. I asked him if he would come and stay with me. He assented.

It was dull, as Mason had prophesied, for nothing occurred to show me it was of the slightest use. Old Franklin made his appearance two or three times, wandering in and out uneasily. He tried to dissuade me from remaining—no longer by talk of ghosts—but by offering to show me over the house, with all its modern improvements. I resisted his allurements, until, late in the afternoon, I recollect that Lady Clarissa's portrait was in the picture gallery, and I felt a curiosity to see it, and know what, if the ghost appeared at all, she would appear like. I requested Mason to remain during my absence, which he faithfully promised to do. The picture showed me a beautiful face, a pearl grey satin dress, and one fair hand resting upon the head of a large greyhound. The sight of the dog recalled my canine acquaintance of the preceding evening, and I asked the housekeeper, if to her knowledge it had been seen that day. She was, or feigned to be, ignorant.

"What was the name of the second Lord Castelneau, Lady Clarissa's husband?" I asked.

"Henry, sir."

"And the dog in the picture is one of his, I presume," I said, recalling with some excitement the initial of "H. Castelneau" I had found on the huge dog's collar. "Is there not some story," I added, "that Lady Clarissa haunts the cellars?"

"So they say, sir, but I never saw her myself, nor any one else, unless it may be some kitchen-maid or country lad; but my lord never likes the story being talked of."

As it was too dusk to discern more of the pictures, I returned to the oak room, pondering over the "H. Castelneau" on the collar, and coming to no satisfactory conclusion. On opening the door, the first object that struck my eye was the hound stretched on the hearth, as I had first seen him the night before.

I rang the bell, and asked the servant if he had admitted the dog, but he seemed as astonished as myself, and denied all knowledge of it. I bent down to examine the collar again, but to-night the thing showed its teeth, and would not allow me.

"Henry, Lord Castelneau!" I muttered, "and Lady Clarissa! I shall sleep here to-night."

Our two other friends came in shortly afterwards, laughing at my whim, and the dinner was served. Franklin also appeared for a few minutes, and looked more seriously discomposed than he had before, to see that we had no intention of removing that evening. He ventured a remonstrance, but was little heeded by our merry company.

The cloth was withdrawn, and Franklin brought with his own hands a small tray of cold meats and light refreshments, which he set upon a distant table at the back of the sofa. We paid little heed then to his sudden fit of hospitality, and sat down to read. The evening passed, but we were not again disturbed by any ominous sounds.

"We have scared the ghost, at all events," said Mason, as twelve o'clock struck; "I'm tired, and shall give it up. Hillyard, I suppose you are satisfied?"

"By no means," I answered: "I shall stay here to-night."

I adhered to my resolution, and Mason volunteered to stop with me. The others left us, and he threw himself on the sofa, while I sat before the fire, reading intently. I extinguished all the candles but two, placed one of them beside his sofa, and took the other to the chimney-piece. Mason's deep breathing soon announced he was asleep, and I read on. At last the wakefulness of the preceding night had its effect: I lost the sense of my pages, the letters danced before my eyes, and I fell into a slumber. I might have been unconscious about ten minutes, when I was aroused by a call from Mason—

"She's here! Lady Clarissa! I saw her hand putting out my light!"

I started up. My own candle was burning very dimly with a portentously long wick, and, quick as thought, I snuffed it to obtain more light. My haste defeated its object—I snuffed it out!

The fire threw a faint glimmer around the room, and by its uncertain light I saw a dim, grey shadow, like a woman's form, standing near the wall at the back of Mason's sofa. I sprang towards it.

The carved oak table, which, in the glimmer, I had overlooked, arrested my progress, and I stumbled. I recovered myself immediately, but in that second the grey shadow had disappeared. I rushed to the place where it had seemed to stand—the hard oaken panelling alone met my touch.

"Mason! Mason!—why did you not stop her?" I exclaimed, angrily.

"It is not so easy for a man just waked up from sleep," said Mason. "I am no believer in ghosts, Hillyard; or, rather, I was not, but I don't know, after to-night. Let me light the candle first, and then you can examine the room at your leisure."

This was done, and my first glance round the room assured me the dog had disappeared. I again sounded the panels—they all rang equally hollow. I examined the bolt of the door into the Gothic Hall; it seemed never to have been moved. I even knelt down to look at the boards of the flooring, but no sign of a trap-door met my eye. Mason then said—

"It is of no use, Hillyard. If it was really Lady Clarissa, it is waste of time to look for a door; she does not need one. You must give it up. For my part, the excitement has made me hungry, and I shall profit by some of the steward's sandwiches that he so obligingly left on the table by the sofa."

"They are gone," I said, drily, "tray and all. Lady Clarissa seems as hungry as the priests of Bel. Never mind. As you say, Mason, I'll give it up for to-night."

The next morning was bright and sunny. I awoke with the full conviction that we had been played upon by some of the dependants of the house, though for what motive I could not imagine. The semi-credulity which (though I was ashamed to own it) I had felt at night, had vanished; for though I might have believed in Lady Clarissa, with her grey satin dress, and her attendant dog, the disappearance of the sandwiches destroyed the illusion; but I resolved I would take no further steps except communicating all I knew to Lord Castelneau on his return.

After breakfast we took our guns and sallied forth in company with the gamekeepers. We had gone about half a mile from the house when I found I had left my watch behind, and recollecting I had placed it on the chimney-piece in the haunted room. I told my friends I would join them after

a while, and returned to the house. Instead of entering the hall, I went round to the old wing, passed into the old-fashioned garden, and, keeping on the turf to deaden my footsteps, gained the window of the oak room. One of them was open, and I looked in.

Opposite the window stood Franklin, too much absorbed in what he was saying to heed my approach; and beside him was a woman, tall and graceful, with dark curling hair, and a grey shimmering silk dress. It was she who was speaking when I first drew nigh to listen, and her low and sweet voice won my sympathy for the speaker before she had said a dozen words.

"If you think he can be moved with safety, Franklin—if it will not injure him very much—let us do it at once. I cannot pass another day like yesterday, and we do not know at what hour they may return."

"There's no fear of hurting him, Miss Hester. I and Peter from the lodge can lift him easily enough; but I think there is no other room in the house where we can keep him so well hidden. The spring of the panel worries even me sometimes to find it, though I know it so well. It is very trying for you, miss; but when my lord comes home, we can tell him all, and he will keep his friends at a distance."

"No, I cannot wait till then," answered the young lady; "I must risk the chance of discovery. I thought he was dying the other night when I ventured out for the tray; and it would be terrible if they should stay the whole day instead of only a few hours in this room."

"You may command it in future, madam," I cried, springing in at the window.

Both the lady and Franklin had started back with astonishment and dismay at the sound of my voice, and neither seemed disposed to speak. At last Franklin said, with hesitation—

"I am sure, Mr. Hillyard, you are incapable of using this discovery to our disadvantage."

"Is this Mr. Hillyard—Mr. Laurence Hillyard?" said the lady.

I bowed assent.

"I am glad," she continued, "that our secret has fallen into such friendly hands. Your name, as my brother's early friend, is well known to me, and I believe that you will not betray us."

I looked at her with stupefaction. "And you, madam," I said, "I have not the pleasure—" "

"I am Hester Castelneau," she answered, quickly; "the sister of Paul Castelneau, your college friend. You did not, perhaps, know that my brother was not fortunate enough to escape unhurt in his late encounter with Sir Jasper Rivers, and that this house has become at once his hospital and his hiding-place."

"And Paul Castelneau is—"

"Is here. My brother is in concealment behind those panellings, and if his life is preserved to us, it must be at the cost of a long absence from his native country."

She pointed in the direction of the wall as she spoke. I looked and saw that there was an aperture of two or three inches in width left between the heavy carvings of the wall behind the sofa, and consequently in the place where the grey shadow had vanished the previous evening. I had sounded that panel as well as the others, and can only account for its not ringing differently by the fact that the concealed room ran the whole length of the large chamber, and consequently every one of the panels was equally hollow.

"Is Paul there?" I said.

She only bent her head in reply, and, without further speech, I pushed open the panel, which slid noiselessly back, and entered the concealed room. My poor friend was there upon a couch, and the large stag-hound Alan crouched on the floor beside him, with his nose near his master's hands. Paul was, however, unconscious of my presence, and I returned to the outer room to offer my services to the sister.

Miss Hester Castelneau was talking in a low voice to the steward, and I had ample opportunity for studying her beautiful face, before she was aware of my presence. I commenced an apology for having caused her any inconvenience, and hoped she would not think of removing her brother to another room.

She thanked me.

"But, Miss Castelneau," said I, "may I ask what the peculiar danger of your brother is?—for affairs of honour are too common to excite such extreme alarm, even were Sir Jasper already dead."

"It might be so under ordinary circumstances," said Miss Castelneau; "but not now. Sir Jasper had greatly wronged some people who had no power to chastise him. It came to my brother's knowledge, and he insisted on reparation, too

rashly, perhaps, without waiting for the customary formalities. There was only one man present, and he and Sir Jasper are, I hear, ready to swear any falsehood against my brother. I was travelling with Paul, and had him conveyed here when there was a hope of secrecy, till we hear if Sir Jasper is likely to die."

I assured her of my secrecy, and begged she would let me be of service to her. She thanked me, and I then relieved her of my presence.

A few days afterwards, our difficulties were removed by Lord Castelneau's return, bringing the news that Sir Jasper Rivers was pronounced out of danger. There was, of course, no further need for Paul's concealment.

The anxiety under which Paul had laboured had kept him down; but from the moment of his receiving the welcome news of the recovery of Sir Jasper, he rapidly mended. Bitterly, too, did he repent of his criminal rashness in this unfortunate affair, which, had Providence more sternly ordained, would have brought upon him the curse of Cain, and made him a vagabond upon the face of the earth. Happily for this later generation, duelling and its attendant miseries are no more. With regard to this it may be truly said—

"The swiftly moving march of mind
Has left barbarity behind."

One fortnight more I passed at Castelneau Court in the enjoyment of the occasional society of Hester Castelneau. Then she and her brother returned to their own home; and I, growing suddenly weary of the country, went back to London. In conclusion, I will mention the appearance of the following paragraph, in a fashionable paper, the year after:—

"Left London, for their country seat in Devonshire, Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Hillyard, and Mr. Castelneau, on the 13th instant;" that is, one year from the day when I had first made the acquaintance of the Ghost of Castelneau Court.

TWILIGHT.

OMETIMES we like to see the darkening evening sky,
Or to stand in quiet graveyards while the sun sinks in the west;
And it seemeth to our hearts far more hard to live than die, *
And the single boon we yearn for is a time of perfect rest.

As we turn from paths grown dusty with the trampling feet that pass,
From the weary sound of laughter born of joys we do not share,
And lie down in the shadows on the clover-scented grass,
And feel the silent loveliness God spreadeth everywhere;

So we shrink from life's confusion, and its darkness, and its heat,
From its loves like Dead Sea apples, for the bitter taste they leave;
From its single chance of conquest, and its thousand of defeat;
And we muse, "If we should leave it, who would miss us? who would grieve?"

We ask rest, for we are feeble; yet it is not rest we crave,
 Only greater strength for labour, only firmer faith and love,
 Such as God will give us, when our dust is in the grave,
 And we have joined the angel ranks that do his will above.

For in heaven all do service, from the mighty forms of light
 Half shrouded in God's glory, standing close before his throne,
 To the darling little baby that was buried but last night
 Underneath a tiny cross, with its half-year age thereon.

And God gives us, too, our duties, and we only dimly guess
 Which is highest or which lowest, for man doth not ever know
 The beginning or the ending, or which he will choose:
 We must till the fields he gives us, and the seeds he sends must sow.

The birds may come and take them, or the winds may bear them far,
 We may weep our wasted labour, but we see not where they fall;
 And whilst we, who know but partly, sigh, "What useless things we are!"
 He may deem us faithful servants, because he knoweth all.

I. F.

"OUT OF TOWN."—LLANDUDNO.

BY THE EDITOR.

SEEN the evening paper, sir?" "Thank you." In these brief words began my acquaintance with one of the travellers who, on a certain Saturday afternoon, shared with myself and two other fellow-travellers a compartment in a carriage of the London and North-Western Railway. A few general remarks on such interesting topics as the present state of the weather, and the probabilities of its continuance, lead up to my fellow-traveller observing what a pity that the five o'clock train did not bring passengers direct to Llandudno, as in many respects it was more convenient. I immediately concluded the gentleman was going to the said Llandudno, and being bound for the same charming little prince, or, to be more superlative still, princess of watering-places myself, our railway friendship became at once confirmed. The real misfortune of not being able to travel by the later train (a fast one) became painfully apparent after we passed Crewe, when our train stopped at every small station on the line, and a continued unsettling of legs comfortably placed, and removal of rugs and umbrellas carefully packed on empty seats, resulted from the repeated changing of passengers at the various roadside stations. Our journey was a little relieved, however—selfish creatures that we were—by the misery of an old gentleman who had lost his luggage at some branch line station. One of the missing articles was a bag containing a lot of rabbit-traps. Unfortunately, it had no lock on it, and the repeated assurances which we gave him of the probability of its being taken by the police for some offensive weapons connected with Fenianism, by no means tended to

console his agitated mind. Near our journey's end now, however; this is the last stop but one.

"Know the name of this place, sir?" This from gentleman on extreme left to passenger facing him. "Yes; Rhyl. 'Twas here Oakley died last week;" and the remains of the cigar which, by kind permission of the company, he had been enjoying, was tossed from the window, and the casement returned to its former closeness with a bang. "'Twas here Oakley died." The remark was brief and indifferently made; just an item of passing news, but it signified much. It meant that in the little Welsh watering-place a good man and true—an accomplished gentleman—an eloquent preacher, and energetic pastor—had passed away in the full prime of his career, and the vigour of his manhood.

The Junction at last: ten minutes more and we (our company by this time reduced to two) come at our journey's end. A shaking of rugs, and changing of mysteriously-formed caps for more orthodox beavers, beguile the last few minutes.

The gaslights are twinkling along the inland side of Great Orme's Head, and the merry little town itself is all ablaze with brighter gaslights than I have ever met with in Piccadilly. What a glorious institution gas! I remember visiting Llandudno once before we had gas, and it was awfully dismal; but now, even if we had not pleasant faces waiting around a well-spread table to receive us, we should feel less strange, for our old friend gas would be here to light us to an inn. I honour the memory of the man who eat the first oyster—I remember hearing he was a greater hero than he who sailed

in the first ship!—but I honour more the memory of him who first proposed to illuminate our streets with gas. I feel it as Mostyn Street stretches out so bright and cheerful before me, and I think of a quiet little grave I once saw in a foreign land. It was in the cemetery of Père-la-Chaise, and it bore the forgotten name of Windsor!

There are few people who enjoy a day in the country so much as a Londoner; there are few Londoners who enjoy a day in the country so well as I do; and there is no day I enjoy there so much as Sunday. The sum of these three propositions represents the happiness of my state of mind on looking out of my window on the cheery sunshiny Sunday morning following at Llandudno. It was a day of rest with land and sea. Smoke ascended from the chimneys straight up, like a gentle vapour, that did not threaten to spoil the pure sky spread behind it in its Sunday blue. The sea without a ripple, and the little waves that did roll at the edge were such tiny, innocent-looking young creatures, that the strictest Puritan could not say they were violating the sanctity of the day; or, as a saucy little lady said to me, "At all events, these waves are not Sabbath 'breakers'!"

In Llandudno you can have every kind of Christianity, except Popery, according to your ecclesiastical predilection. One of the prettiest buildings belongs to the Independents. A charming little Gothic structure it is, with transepts and stained glass windows, and heads, something half human, half divine, carved on the ends of the supports. Hither flock, this morning, Churchmen and Non-conformists alike, to hear one of the most popular men of our day, who is well known to a certain congregation in London, which worships within the walls where once the silver tones of Rowland Hill's voice were heard.

From after church-time until near four o'clock on Sunday Llandudno is within doors; a circumstance to be accounted for by the blaze of roasting sunshine without, and the charms of roasted beef or mutton within, for Llandudno dines incessantly from one to three o'clock. If my friend Jones, of Mayfair, who can never get up an appetite for dinner till near seven o'clock, would only walk along the Llandudno Esplanade at two o'clock, and gaze in through the long line of opened windows at Llandudno dining, I fancy the *vis exempli* would triumph over his *vis inertiae*. But at about half-past three on Sunday Llandudno emerges from its retirement again, and trails in a long single-file cavalcade along the narrow path which belts great Orme's Head. Alpenstocks and stout walking-sticks are in vogue, for the path is steep and long. The little yellow leather boots, which defy the ruggedness of the way, add to the picturesqueness of the fair portion of the procession. On slowly and wearily winds the cavalcade;

the pilgrims are all bound for the shrine of St. Tudno. Oh, worthy saint! who, like Melchizedek, seems not to have had paternal or maternal relations, nor beginning of days nor end of life, for thy most devoted devotees cannot say whence thou hast come—charity alone ventures an aspiration as to whither thou has gone!—Why erect thy shrine on so lofty a peak? so high, that we may say of it, as has been said of the hill of Howth, where St. Patrick preached a memorable discourse, *Dat oscula sideribus*. We bless the cranium of great Orme for his delightful shade, for far below on our right the sea looks like one vast basin of silver, molten and liquefied with the terrible blaze of the sun; and even the rocks towering on our left seem scorched with all the heat they have endured in the daytime, and remind us of the blistered crags that Mr. Herbert has painted in the Robing Room of the Lords.

At last, as we round a promontory, St. Tudno's is in sight, so provokingly high above us still, and the bell rings out with a sound that you might imagine proceeded from a cracked saucepan being struck with the broken fragment of a poker. This little church stands up on the top of an uncultivated mountain, and in the centre of a lone little churchyard. A reading desk is erected—extemporaneously—against the wall of the churchyard, for St. Tudno's church cannot contain so vast an assembly as pours thitherward from Llandudno. The congregation sit some on tombstones, some on the low walls, some on those little mounds.

"Where heaves the grass in many a mouldering heap;" and few congregations are more attentive, perhaps none more impressed with the et-ceteras of Divine service. The evening is calm and still, and not a sound disturbs the solemnity, save once when a donkey in a neighbouring field brayed, most inopportunely, at the end of an interrogative passage in the first lesson; and again when the strains of a popular melody reached us from a passing Liverpool excursion steamer. We might pardon the one, for it was only a donkey; but the other had no mitigating circumstance whatever. Steamers piled up with human beings, perspiring and swearing, and in divers other ways "deriving from Nature the lessons which she is calculated to teach," are scarcely likely to increase the solemnity of any scene. However, as the echoes of a hymn, in which all join heartily, die away on the hill-side, I think of a little congregation who "sang a hymn," years ago, in the open air, when "prayer was wont to be made by a riverside." My seat was a small white tombstone, and it had a plain little inscription, yet one that you would scarcely expect to find in so remote a place—one, too, that awoke very solemn thoughts. It told us that there was buried there,

in that consecrated spot, a little child, only six years of age, who had died at Llandudno, and that his father's name was John Bright, M.P. We can imagine the heart touched, and the manly form bowed with grief; and the sad, mournful consolation that it gave to one so great and good to lay his loved little one in the lonely mountain churchyard, and write upon its tomb, in words which seem to reflect the bigness of his own heart, "There shall be one fold and one Shepherd." Scribe! no longer intrude thy reflections on a father's grief: join the dispersing crowd, which wend their way back by another road—this time through occasional fields and past deserted mining shafts—and give a penny, as we pass on, to those

little urchins who stand and sing so sweetly, in Welsh and English, "God bless the Prince of Wales."

One farewell look at St. Tudno's before we turn the road to Llandudno. Memories we have of that pleasant Sabbath evening, as bright and golden as the sunshine that falls now upon St. Tudno's old grey tower, as if pleased to linger where it has shone for so many a century. The returned crowd disperse through the town; and soon lights shine brightly at many a happy tea-table. Ere these lines be printed, we who met that evening shall be scattered far and wide. May we all meet together with Him who himself prayed once upon a mountain-top.

THE CATTLE PLAGUE

T has become the fashion in many quarters at the present day to speak as though law was everything and God was nothing. In reading some communications concerning the murraim amongst the cattle, for instance, we find many materialistic theorists who talk as if the universe was a great machine set in order by God, and that man has only to keep the works clean, and all will be well. Admitting, as we fully do, the necessity and excellency of cleanliness, we yet decline to treat as synonymous the words "dirt" and "sin." Many special epidemics have their rise in the former as an occasion of development; but the source of all plague and pestilence is that sin which brings death into the world, and all its woes.

We can no longer shut our eyes to the nature and extent of the cattle plague. But yesterday, we read of London alone:—"Of 4,108 cows kept in the eastern parishes of London, 568 have died, and 1,504 have been sold;" whilst in the counties generally the disease is spreading, and the attacks most virulent.

It is the general duty of fanaticism to find "special reasons"—such as the connection of the potato blight with the grant to Maynooth. And doubtless our satirists have not been a whit too severe upon the expounders of Divine reasons for such dispensations; but many a laugh raised at the expense of some pernicious error, often prevents men seeing a truth which lies close beside it, and which suffers in the wholesale condemnation attending the attempt to specify the special reason of the Divine judgments.

With all due deference, therefore, to the satirists of fanaticism, we claim to plead for a principle which this age is greatly in danger of ignoring, and that principle is this:—Although science cannot point to any physical connection between the

cattle plague and the sins of the present day, there may be a moral connection which we are in danger of overlooking. God rules over all, and certainly in this case his judgments are abroad in the earth.

We have no notion of men folding their hands in ease, and saying—"Beastly state the Continent is in, sir; don't wonder at the Rinderpest, or any other pest." The fact being that wherever originated, so far as this country is concerned, it has *not* seized upon the dirty sheds and the ill-fed cattle only or chiefly, but upon the well-cleansed sheds and the more favoured kine. We cannot understand this; but we cannot ignore it. Doubtless, as a general rule, any contagious disease fixes first and foremost on the dirtiest locality, but it shows that it is no respecter of persons or places: the conditions, for instance, which cholera requires are not only uncleanliness, but *weakness* and *nervousness*, quite a sufficient fact to show that it exists independently of all mere material things: it has a mission of death to perform, and a mission of warning to all thoughtful men.

Disease in the meat! Well, is it not worth while considering in what an age of luxury we live? Only to be deprived of it for a few months seems actually like a grievance to us. The restless determination to have all we wish, to secure it by any means, at any price, characterises this age. Soil not rich enough? then make artificial manures; never mind how. You little know what lurks in that blade of grass your cattle eat. Supply not large enough? then send to any country, buy in the cheapest market; and—well, what?—buy anything that will sell. This we have done with a recklessness quite surprising to any at all acquainted with the subject. Who is to gain? The dealer making haste to be rich—to be rich under any conditions, at any cost. Who is to lose? The poor mechanic or artisan, who is too ignorant in the matter to

know that indifferent meat is the costliest provision he can buy, and that bad meat contains the worst poison of all.

God may be saying to us now, "Food for the service of man is my gift; you are looking upon it as your right. You are using it not as a grateful recipient of favour, but as the common heritage of the race."

Doubtless there are men who would try to resolve the plagues of Egypt into natural causes, and with their usual genius for explanation, endeavour to maintain what they call the historical facts without the miraculous accretions. But, on the whole, the narrative of these plagues, so simple and yet so solemn, entirely beats them. Science might explain the frogs; but it is aghast at the darkness and the blood. And are there no judgments of God now? Ought we to think him so well pleased with us as to suffer us to have immunity from correction and visitation? No same man amongst us but must often be overwhelmed with the spectacle even of this city's sins and iniquities. And what must they be in the eye of God? Shall not I visit for this, saith the Lord? Assuredly, there can be no harm in asking whether this is the voice of God speaking to us in the judgment of his hand. And here it may be suggested that one of the very sins of this age crops out in the discussion concerning the cattle murrain, and that is, a worship of the almighty dollar. We read: "The Hamburgers and Hollanders are now singing a jubilee, on account of our bovine calamities. Besides, my friend Brown, down in Shropshire, who has got lots of sheep, is selling them now at a tremendous profit; the demand for mutton being proportionate to the impossibility of obtaining enough beef." And for this reason the writer objects to the Archbishop of Canterbury's prayer on account of the grievous murrain. We are not to be asked to be made humble, because, if some suffer, others have—we quote the words—"their breeches pockets full of English gold." The logical sequence of all these remarks is, that if some are made rich, no matter who sickens or suffers; a good end is attained, and we need not be humbled before God.

Alas for our day if such sentiments ever can be uttered or written amongst us, without a withering denunciation of shame! I suppose that, during the dread plague which drove such multitudes from Old London, people were not to be humbled before God because in the country places men made their fortunes by the large additions to their trade.

Verily, disease like this in itself is enough to humble us. How know we what atmospheric affinity it may have with cholera or even plague? It be-

comes us not indeed, as Christians, to be full of trepidation and alarm; but it does surely become us to mark the hand of God. The cattle murrain sets at naught science, and skill, and care; and with its wide and irresistible sweep lays low the healthiest animal in a day. So too can God cause his visitations to be felt on man, whilst science before him is dumb, and opens not her mouth. Personally we ought to humble ourselves before God at such seasons of calamity. It is not the sword of an avenging God that we recognise in our present suffering, but the rod of a tender Father, chastening the children whom he loves, and drawing back to his fold those who have erred and strayed from his ways.

And now permit me to ask whether this is a new thing in the earth, and whether God hath not so visited the nations before? What says the Prophet Joel? "Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests"—"The meat offering is cut off from the house of the Lord"—"Sanctify ye a fast"—"How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed"—"Alas for the day!"—"Is not the meat cut off before our eyes?" All these passages occur in the first chapter of Joel. Well may they awaken in us a consciousness that God can lay his hand upon the cattle on a thousand hills; and that when he does so the nation should fast, the ministers of the altar bow in sackcloth, and all who are called by the name of the Most High copy the prophet's example—"O Lord, to thee will I cry" (Joel i. 19). Painful indeed must it be to pious men, strange and wonderful to truly philosophic men, that such flippant scepticism should uplift itself in the nation and speak as with the voice of an oracle concerning these things. We are not yet, as a people, ready to bow down before the cold sceptre and the stern dominion of changeless law. We still repeat in our Creed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty"—not only in the great I Am, but in the Father; and as his children we still bow before his feet, and submit unto his rod. But connected with submission and trust, there is the consciousness that he heareth us always for his dear Son's sake, and that if he would spare the guilty cities for the sake of ten righteous men, much more will he spare us for the sake of his well-beloved Son, concerning whom we are well assured that he will also with him freely give us all things. With a creed so clear, and a faith so firm, whilst we still come "with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel ii. 12), we will yet continue the course which the same prophet presents before us—"And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, AND REPENTETH HIM OF THE EVIL."

W. M. S.



"And they find a mad woman speaking
To the speechless dead!"—p. 106.

ORPHANED.

HUSH! list 'mid the groans of the dying,
Strewn thick on the plain,
Where cries on the night wind come
sighing—
Where thick lie the slain!

Where the pale moon gleams, weirdly shining
On each visago white;
And the eyes gaze in sad repining,
Through the long, cold night!

Hush! list to the wail of an infant,
Low, tremulous, weak,
As all vainly it pats, in its want,
Its dead father's cheek!

Its mother, with reason fast failing,
Sees nought but the dead;

She heeds not the wee one's wailing,
She moves not her head!

The raven flaps gloomily near her;
The vulture swoops by;
The gaunt wolf seems scarcely to fear her,
So fixed is her eye!

* * * * *
'Tis morn—and the soldiers are seeking
'Mid the carnage dread;
And they find a mad woman speaking
To the speechless dead!

And a wee child is gently sleeping,
Its little cheek pressed
Against the dead's, as, softly weeping,
It slumbered to rest!

S. F. N.

THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN LIFE AMONG THE EVILS OF THE WORLD.

BY THE REV. W. B. MACKENZIE, M.A.

DEW of the comforts or even necessities of our daily use are indigenous. Foreign produce have been transferred, and made to flourish in a strange but congenial soil. It is a wise arrangement of Providence that productions which minister to our convenience or welfare thus adapt themselves to other climates, that the native growth of one country will flourish healthily as exotic in another. Still, there are limits to this law of acclimatisation. Fruits which ripen spontaneously under the suns of Italy or Spain, lose their luscious taste in these northern skies—or, at least, require the nurture of scientific care, and shelter from ungenial severities. But no care can induce the camel to thrive in Norway, nor the reindeer in Turkey; the Highlands of Inverness can never be clothed with vines, nor are the fisheries of the Mediterranean enriched with the dainties of northern seas; Labrador has no fields of rice; its gales are not perfumed with groves of cinnamon; nor are the winter nights of Arabia lighted up by the prismatic splendours that stream in Arctic skies. The Lap or Greenlander, who thrives among the ice-bound barrenness, would languish in slow death in the gorgeous luxuriance of the tropics, while the beauty of Circassia, or the gigantic symmetry of Bengal, would perish beneath the keen blasts of the frozen North.

Equally ungenial is the world itself as the moral dwelling-place of man. Doubtless, at that early period described in Gen. ii, this world was

well adapted to man's spiritual welfare, as the world to come will be to the "redeemed of the Lord;" but the disaster which Moses narrates with circumstantial solemnity in his third chapter, has subverted these moral relationships as completely as if the plants of the tropics were transferred to the Arctic zone, and life that flourished amid snows and tempest was left to languish in fever, and perish beneath the malaria of Oriental vegetation.

Such is the action of the world, as it now is, upon spiritual life. It contains elements of evil as deleterious to the health of the soul as certain mephitic gases are to physical life. The people of the world, unconsciously or otherwise, breathe this tainted air; and as to the duties and claims of spiritual existence, are simply "dead while they live." The three first verses of St. Paul's great exposition of the Spirit's work, in Eph. ii., is a decisive proof-text of man's condition by nature—"dead in trespasses and sins"—"children of wrath, walking according to the course of this world," regulated, as its "course" is, by Satanic superintendence and control, "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." These are utterances of the Spirit of truth, clear and ominous, which determine, beyond all controversy, that spiritual life, wherever it is found, is imparted to the soul by the special interposition of God, and is preserved from extinction by the same sustaining grace which "holdeth our souls in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved."

The position which the Christian is designed to occupy, and his duties, defensive as well as aggres-

sive, whereby he is to glorify God in the earth, demand the gravest consideration; and never more so than at the present time. It is essential to his Christian stability and growth, as well as the fulfilment of his every-day duties, that he shall be solemnly possessed by convictions of the pervading and ever-restless elements of evil in which he lives. If these evils are estimated as slight and superficial, so that all scenes and societies are held to be equally harmless, no stronger evidence can be adduced to prove that such a one has but a dim and feeble insight into spiritual things; while no token can be clearer that he is taught of God, and savours of the things of the Spirit, than to discern aright his condition and duties in the present evil world, so as to be vigilantly alive to its snares and concealed seductions, resolved to overcome its temptations, and by every available means to rescue some victims from its grasp, and abate in some measure its abounding depravity.

There are two ways of withstanding these evils, of which the character and conduct of John the Baptist and his Divine Master are inspired illustrations. John had been brought up in the seclusion of the desert. His aspect was not conciliating; his garments coarse and his food homely. Retiring and ascetic in his habits, he kept aloof from the sympathies and companionships of social life. The Lord adopted the opposite course. In early life he conciliated the favour of those around him, and when engaged in his great ministrations he lived in the spirit of condescending familiarity. He was present at weddings and funerals, sympathised with the home duties of the common people, and shared their every-day trials. He noticed their children, and graciously took them in his arms; he felt compassion for their wants and hardships, and stooped to ease the burdens of daily life. Here are the two patterns of Christian life spent among the evils of the world,—the one secluded, unsocial, severe, as some men think,—the other, genial and sympathising. The one represents the Christian seeking safety by isolation from the world; the other treads the common path, but keeps himself from the evil. The one avoids the conflict; the other meets it with bold and resolute fidelity, gains strength in conflict, and is crowned with victory. The first is represented by John the Baptist; the second course was pursued by our Lord. He mixed freely with the world; his presence graced the table of the rich Pharisee, and he spent a day with the oppressive and unpopular Zacchaeus. But his one purpose was everywhere faithfully carried out, to fulfil the object of his great mission—“I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.” Whether reclining as a guest at the banquet of the rich, or on the mountain-side with thousands at his feet intently listening to his gracious words; whether replenishing a marriage feast with wine,

or restoring a widow’s son alive again to his weeping mother; whether blessing little children, or commanding the stormy elements to be at peace—in all things, minute or stupendous, he was equally glorifying the Father, and fulfilling the work which was given him to do.

But the Lord was in no danger of being injured by contact with the world. He had no infection of nature for temptations to work upon. He had endured the severest trials which Satan could devise, “yet without sin.” No stain of evil settled on that unsullied brow. Wherever he went, however deeply sin had infected the atmosphere, he remained untainted. Intimately as he mixed among sinners—in their homes, in the streets, or in the crowded assemblies—he ever withdrew as holy, harmless, undefiled as he went. We, too, have our work to do which brings us among all kinds of evil. Whatever be our station in life—some as masters, with a wider circle of responsibilities; others as servants, with fewer cares and duties; some fill higher positions, while to others is assigned a lower, and, in many respects, a happier lot, just as the Great Disposer of all things is pleased to arrange—every man has his own niche to fill, and abiding there in contented and useful service, he is safe.

Still, we are all brought inevitably in contact with the outside world. We must meet men of all characters, must buy and sell, converse and act together for the various purposes of life; whether as lawyers and merchants, as employers of labour, or clerks and subordinate agents, as teachers or children, as mistresses or servants. This kind of intercourse with others is inevitable, we cannot escape it, unless, as St. Paul says, “we would go out of the world.” In this way we are compelled to meet all kinds of evil—men whose principles and conduct we cannot but disapprove and desire to avoid. But we have no choice, our business in life cannot be fulfilled without mixing every day among the people of the world. Our Lord met them in accomplishing his great work, and has placed us in positions where we must meet them too.

And there are manifest advantages in real Christians thus intermingling, in conscientious fulfilment of duty, among the people of the world. It teaches them to be genial, sympathising, and considerate; it opens the way for others to consult them in difficulty, to unbosom their sorrows, and perhaps seek their counsel when anxious about eternal things. It gives them opportunities for useful service, by speaking words in season; it creates occasions to guide the inquiring, to soothe the mournful, or to warn the negligent and ungodly. And the Christian will be on the look out for such opportunities. Still, he will ever be on his guard against the insidious evils of the world. He will never lose sight of the warnings which the Scriptures loudly reiterate—“Be not conformed to this world.” “Love

not the world, nor the things that are in the world." "The friendship of this world is enmity with God." Here is our danger: the infection of its evil reaches everywhere—nations, cities, parishes, households. It is not an occasional but unwelcome visitor, like the pestilence which visits a country at certain intervals, and settles with desolating ravages only in some hotbeds already prepared for it by the presence of fermenting corruptions; but it is always at work, everywhere, among all kinds of people. No precautions can arrest the evils of the world, no lines can be drawn around the infected quarters. The godliest of parents, who guard the precincts of their houses with laws of rigorous quarantine, cannot prevent the sacred circle of their families from being invaded by the pollution of the world which is ever and everywhere present.

No words of warning can be too strong to admonish especially the young against venturing, unbidden by duty, among the seductive fascinations of the world. There are places and occasions where the evils, from which the Lord prayed that his disciples might be kept, are gathered into one burning focus, and operate with intensely aggravated virulence; scenes where temptations are presented amid brilliant attractions, heightened by the witchery of song and the fascinations of display, that he must be more, or less, than mortal who can return uninjured from scenes like these, which bewilder the understanding, add fresh incentives to passion, while they deaden and corrupt the heart.

The complaint is often heard that the tone of Christian teaching in our day has lost the power and direct bearing upon the business of life which enriched the public ministrations of former days. It may be feared there is too much truth in this complaint. Let the example of the Lord, however, instruct us how to conduct our conflict with the world. He mingled among men of all characters; even the outcasts of the city population he descended to receive, and even to eat with them." But he never lost sight of his great mission—as the Salt of the earth, the Light of the world, the Great Shepherd intent upon seeking as well as saving

that which is lost. He knew what was in men, and all their mysteries of evil. He lived among them, with the deep consciousness that he was destined "to overcome the world;" and he did overcome it, by his unsullied intercourse, by his unwearied benevolence, by his perfect example, by his gracious teaching, by his atoning death and glorious resurrection; and ever since, by the coming of the Holy Ghost, by the progress of his Gospel, and the fidelity of his people. Let us strive to pass our lifetime among men in the same spirit of compassionate sympathy, unyielding faithfulness, and abounding love. Let us ever show ourselves gentle in spirit, as companions of their tribulation, and fellow-helpers in whatever can promote their true joy—sorrow with them, work with them, rejoice with them; in the spirit of the Lord himself, ever seeking to do as he did, feel as he felt, and speak as he spake. Let us carry his message of mercy to the homes of the poor, and, if it may be so, bear our testimony in the meekness of wisdom among the circles of the rich. Let us ever fulfil the duties of life, wherever our lot may be—at home or abroad, in business or recreation; whether we are "unknown" among strangers, or well known among familiar circles; in sorrow or in joy; ever remembering Him in whose hand our breath is, and with whom are all our ways; who watches us with unfailing interest, and is ready to deliver or defend in each crisis of danger. Soon, at the utmost, the great conflict will be over, and little will be known of our struggles, sorrows, and joys. Nor need we regret, reader, if our names shall disappear—unblazoned and unknown—from the records of a world whose glory decays as the flower of the field, if only we have a part in that "unfading inheritance" which is "reserved" for those who are "kept from the evil," and have contributed some items of service to guide some wanderer into the way of peace.

"Not myself, but the truth that in life I have spoken;
Not myself, but the seed that in life I have sown,
Shall pass on to ages—all about me forgotten,
Save the truth I have spoken, and the things I have done."

DEPARTMENT FOR THE YOUNG.

THE BOY WITH THE HARELIP.

HERE was a boy who moved into our neighbourhood with a harelip. Did you ever see a person with a harelip? It is the upper lip slit up like the lip of a hare. It has to be sewed together by the doctor; but even then it is never as good as a perfect one. Indeed, you can never know the useful office of the lips in speaking, until you

hear a person talk with a harelip. James Jones had one. You could hardly understand him at first. Every kind person pitied him.

But there was one boy who seemed to take pleasure in James's misfortune. He took every good chance of mocking and making fun of him. He liked to tease and make him angry. No really kind or generous boy laughed at him. They tried to understand what he said, and answered him civilly. James knew George Wilson made fun of him, and

it hurt his feelings very much. Sometimes he cried his eyes red, and often ran home before the rest to get rid of him.

"Oh, mother," he used to ask, "why did my heavenly Father give me a harelip and none of the other boys?"

"Because he *loves* you, dear child," said his mother.

"Oh!" sighed the poor boy, "how can that be?"

You know, James, when little children are hurt or get into trouble, they run to their mother's arms for help and comfort. Your kind heavenly Father has given you this, to bring you to him for comfort and help. It is a part of the training which was necessary to make you his dear child, and fit you for his kingdom of glory in heaven, James. Go to him, dear child, beg him to forgive your murmuring and impatience, and help you by his Holy Spirit to bear it with a meek and quiet spirit, like his dear Son Jesus Christ our Saviour."

This was the way James's mother talked to him; and when the boys plagued him, he did go to his heavenly Father with the story of his sorrows.

A fine spring of water bubbled up not a great way from the school-house, and ran off in a brook. Here the boys used to build dams and put up water-wheels, and spend a great many happy hours. Four or five willow-trees made it still pleasanter, especially in hot weather. One day, as James and two other boys were going to school, they stopped to look at matters round the spring, when one of them spied a slate and two school-books in the crotch of one of the willows.

"It is George Wilson's, and there let it stay," said he; "let him know the fun of losing his slate."

"I say let's hide it," cried the other boy; "it will serve him right; he is the ugliest boy in school."

"No," said James, "let us do *no such thing*; let us do as we would be done by; let us carry it to him."

"You say so, James?" cried both boys at once—"you that he has plagued so! Why, you are a fool, James—a real fool!"

James took the slate and books from the tree, put them under his arm, and marched to school.

As they drew near, they heard loud and angry voices in dispute. It was George accusing some of the boys of stealing his things, and a regular fight was brewing, when James stepped up.

"Here, George, are your things. We found them in a willow-tree by the spring, where I suppose you left them and forgot it; so I thought I'd fetch them to you."

How surprised, ashamed, and relieved George looked.

"Oh, James," he said, humbly; "you brought them, James?"

George did not thank him; it was not George's

way to thank anybody; but he never mocked or made fun of James afterwards.

Oh, what a wise and beautiful way is the Gospel method of getting along—"To overcome evil with good."

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

1. The place where God a wondrous fountain wrought.
2. Assyria's king, whose boastings came to nought.
3. The place where Paul performed his vow; then show
4. A prophet false, whose life was soon brought low.
5. Whose sons both fell, amidst the battle-strife?
6. What Jesus is to those who wish for "life."
7. Who kept the ark, when rescued from the foe?
8. What queen refused to make herself a show?
9. Whose name showed plainly forth his nation's fall?
10. Who, speaking to his wives, spake mystery to all?
11. What counsellor revolted from his lord?
12. A ruler who our Saviour much adored.
13. Who, keeping faithful to his God, despised the pain?
14. What woman showed her husband's strength for gain?
15. Whose uncle first the promised country neared?
16. And at whose feet was Paul th' apostle reared?
17. By what was manna measured as it fell?
18. "A faithful brother," loved by Paul; then tell
19. That wicked son of Eliab, who died,
Swallowed by opening earth in chasm wide.

If in the storm of wild temptation's power
You hold this precept fast, then in that hour
The Lord will surely help thee, in the fight,
The evil to resist, and cleave to what is right.

THE SAILOR-BOY.

A RHYME FOR YOUNG READERS.

HE ship has nearly gained the shore:
From distant oceans she has sailed;
The shock of waves and tempest-roar
Have fought against her, but have failed.

Again the storm is gathering fast;
Again the blast is howling loud;
And shall she not reach port at last,
In spite of wind, and wave, and cloud?

The blast blows strong, the sea rolls high,
The ship is tossed from wave to wave;
And some on board with terror cry,
And some hope ever, and are brave.

From the mast-head, that strains and creaks,
Young Jack peers out with all his might;
And now to him the captain speaks—
"Ho, boy! what is there meets your sight?"

No answer for the moment came;
Then gave the boy a sudden cry—
"Breakers a-head!"—the cry to tame
The wildest heart—a call to die.

"Cast, cast the anchor!" "Turn the helm!"
Too late—too late; she strikes the rock!
The waves her broken prow o'erwhelm,
The vessel sinks beneath the shock!

"Lower the boats! seize each an oar!"
How eagerly they press around!
But, ere they reach the distant shore,
The boats are sunk, and all are drowned.

There's hope for those left on the deck:
The life-boat's launched from yonder strand,
And rides the waves—a tiny speck—
With brave and hardy fellows manned.

"Hurrah! hurrah! the boat is here!"
And room for all they hardly find;
Then back they— Hark! a cry of fear,
One sailor-boy is left behind!

That generous, self-forgetting lad
Gave place to all the rest, and perished.
This memory of a death so sad,
So glorious, shall by all be cherished. ¶

THE FAMILY HONOUR.

BY MRS. C. L. BALFOUR, AUTHOR OF "THE WOMEN OF SCRIPTURE," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONSCIENCE *versus* HONOUR.

"What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted?
Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just;
And he but naked, though locked up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted."

SHAKESPEARE.



REAT as the contrasts in human condition are every day, they present themselves most prominently on that day which good George Herbert calls
"The conch of time—care's balm and bay:
The week were dark but for thy light."

How differently rises the sun of that day to the thoughtful, pious sons and daughters of toil, and to the rich worldling!—to the spirits who are glad to go as loving children to a Father's house, and those who weary of the services, or never enter the portals consecrated to praise and prayer! How different, too, the measure of enjoyment both in the assemblies of worshippers, and from the calm face of Nature, on that sweet returning day! to some there is all fulness, to others mere vacuity.

As Miss Austwick and her niece sat side by side in the carved and curtained old pew under the painted window, which had in its arabesque border a blazonry of the Austwick crest—great as the outward contrast was between the tall, rigid form, and face becoming daily more severe in outline and expression, and the little soft dimpled creature, whose silky ringlets fell caressingly round her white throat, and shaded her delicate cheek, and who, kneeling in the coloured light that streamed through the window, might be taken for a pictured angel draped in prismatic radiance—great as this contrast was, yet, if we use our clairvoyant privilege, and look into the hearts of each, still greater was the difference. Gertrude was all gentle peace and humble gratitude. To her the sacred service was full of comfort and instruction. She did not think, poor child! of criticising the sermon. To her it was a message of truth, to be received reverently. Her young heart was open to the sweet influences of holy light, and the refreshing dews of the heavenly blessing. Little did she know of the uneasy throbbing, the absent bewildered spirit near her, anxious and troubled about many things, commanding an outward

rigidity that passed for calm, yet entering upon that fatal task of endeavouring to reconcile what is opposite—to make right bend to expediency: still with a lofty scorn of what, in worldly phrase, she called "dishonourable," a proud abstract estimate of truth—alas! not so much from religious obligation as from a belief that it was like ancestry and blood, a something that belonged to race. Why did Mr. Nugent invariably select such texts as were displeasing to Miss Austwick? What did he mean by annoying her with what she called his prosing on "All things are naked and open with Him with whom we have to do?" How tranquilly little True's dark eyes were raised to the preacher, while Miss Austwick felt glad that her veil fell down over her face, for she was half conscious of knitting her brow and setting her lips as if to numb some inward pang. How long and tedious! Would he never have done? Why did he not apply the lesson to the common people?—to her servants, who were present, sitting respectfully in a row at the back? They, of course, should be warned of falsehood, and gossiping, and dishonesty. Such faults low people were all prone to. But all this talk of secret sins, of self-deception, of pride that wraps itself in a mantle of isolation before man, only to appear in filthy rags before God—what could Mr. Nugent mean?

She was so perturbed that on returning home she took refuge in her room, on the plea, by no means pretended, of indisposition; and so it fell out that Gertrude had an afternoon to herself in the library, and sought out among some treasures of old divinity for further elucidations of Mr. Nugent's subject, and came to an exactly different conclusion from her aunt as to his merits as a preacher. What the elder lady called Puritanical and pragmatic, Gertrude considered faithful and earnest.

Some consciousness that there was this difference of estimate kept each lady, when they met, from naming the curate, and had, indeed, prevented Gertrude having the pleasure she coveted of something more than a mere bowing acquaintance with Miss Nugent, the pleasant-looking sister who presided over the clergyman's home.

While the Sabbath hours passed thus at Austwick, our acquaintance the packman was ruminating in a little lodgings he had hired at a beer-shop at Milbrook, near

Southampton. He was busy seemingly with pencil and paper, making calculations, sighing often as he did so, as if his reckoning would not come right; and repeating, in a muttering voice, one sentence over and over, "A dead loss, I doubt—a matter of thirty or forty pound a year—gone—clean gone."

His meal was as frugal as ever tavern furnished—bread and cheese and a draught of milk. The people of the house seemed to know him, for they let him have his refreshments in a little gable bedroom, out of the way of all intruders. He looked at his watch—a large tortoise-shell antiquity, in careful preservation—anxiously, and then out of the window, to mark the day's decline. The company of his own thoughts seemed pleasant rather than otherwise, for he refused a light, saying to the servant girl, with a grin that relaxed the tight pockers of his mouth, "One of the richest men in London, my lassie, said there was no need o' candle to talk by; and if he an' his freend could do their talking in the dark, I'm weel able to do my thinking likewise."

They stared at him in profound awe—for, poorly as he was clad, and fared, the people of the house entertained a belief that Old Leathery was very rich; and to that there was added a hope that, as he was eccentric, he might befriend them ultimately. The wily old man's talk, when he came to take up his abode, had led them to some such conclusion. He had told them several tales that they were fond of retailing to their customers, to give zest to their ale:—How once a benevolent London lady had given a dinner on Sundays to a crossing-sweeper; and how, when the sweeper died, he left all his savings, some hundreds, to the lady. How Peter Blundell, the famous Tiverton carrier of olden times, made a great fortune; and in his will remembered every innkeeper that had ever, in his frequent journeys, been kind to him; so that, constructing their own theory about the real circumstances of their annual guest, notwithstanding his constant plea of poverty, and having plenty of that selfishness which so often blinds its possessor, they allowed Old Leathery to take his ease in the inn, much to his own satisfaction, and, as they hoped, to their future benefit.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ACCOMPLICE.

"Still to guilt occasion sends
Slaves, tools, accomplices—no friends." BYRON.

WHEN the church bell had done summoning the people to evening worship, Old Leathery went out, and took his way along the somewhat lonely road towards Southampton. Crossing the railway, he came upon the shingly ridge at the muddy head of the Southampton Water, and, looking towards the glowing lights of the town in the distance, and those on the pier to his right, he seemed to be expecting some one. Heavy clouds swept over the sky in masses, that were only fitfully pierced by watery moonbeams. He had not walked long when he saw a tall woman advancing, who strode along at a quick pace, her shawl and skirts blown about by the wind, and her long arms swinging in unison with her steps, so that she looked like an advancing windmill. Her quick breath-

ing, from the haste of her movements, could be heard even amid the frequent blasts of a squally wind.

As soon as she came near, Old Leathery said, in his hard, dry voice, that cut the air like a razor, "Save your breath, Janet; don't be spending it at that rate. Save it, not to cool your parrich, woman, but to talk to me."

"Save! panted the woman, coming up to him; "I must save time, if I'm to stay yonder. I must na be running aff this rate."

"Ou, it's church-time, Janet: don't fash yourself or me. But say, noo, are ye sure ye were right when you repeated to me that he deceived the lassie, Isabel, and that it was na true about his being married afore?"

"I'm as sure as I live he said it."

"And he not wandering?"

"Wandering! He gave the papers all right. I touched the curtains to get a peep, but they were all done up close in the envelope; and I was as near being found out—for the sister got up quickly, for all as stiff and stately as she is, and was coming round to the side where I stood—but I had left the door in the papered wall aje, and in I popped, as I have telled ye once—you know, when I gave you the only paper I could get. But, I say, Sandy, hear me. I'm tired o' this. I don't know what you're meaning to do, or whar you're guiding me. These crooked ways are wearifu'."

"Wearifu'! Nonsense, woman! What but crooked ways could have saved you or yours, I'd like to know?"

"So you tell me; but I'd like to get away. You promised me money for the voyage long since. I'm sure I've earned it; first and last, I've worked well for you."

"Worked for me, Janet! Ye worked for yoursel'. If the way is crooked, ye know how it was that it ceased to be straight. Ye're surely forgettin'. My wife was never so mighty good to me, that I should put myself out of the way to save you, her sister, from the consequences of both sin and folly."

"Sin! you, Sandy, to talk o' sin!" said the woman, lifting a white face and angry eyes to heaven.

"No one has mair right," he answered, huskily. "You forget, seemingly, that it was you betrayed the trust, and, by your carelessness, going after your sweetheart, caused the baby's death."

"Hush! there's some one coming," said the woman, in a panic of terror.

He looked round quickly, and assured himself it was only her terror that suggested an eavesdropper.

"I'll not hush. I say that, if they charged you wi' murder, they'd ha' proved it. Nae one wad have believed it was an accident—I, even, don't surely know. It was my weakness for you, as belonging to my wife's people, made me trust your story; but I'm, maybe, wrong."

"Sandy, you never said that to me before—never. You do know better."

"Well, we helped you in the only way we could. It was painful, but we could do no other, unless, indeed, we had let the law come in, and then—." He spread out his hands and threw them up, as if all would have been lost, adding, in a low voice—"And now I own I'm terrified when I think if it should ever be known; the

last sin would be thought as bad as the first—the substitution!" He churned out the word slowly between his teeth.

"There, don't—don't speak of it!" she said; adding, a moment after, desperately, "But I could *but* be ruined, body and soul, if all was known."

"It might be worse for Archie. Serve me, and I serve you. I have done so, most carefully; but any meagrim and stuff, and I cease to serve you. I saw a deserter branded at Winchester, only three weeks ago. I'd business wi' the doctor, in the prison; he's known me for years. I saw the branding-iron, Janet, go fizzing into the man's flesh."

"Sandy, don't!" cried Janet, crouching down and covering her face, her gaunt form seeming to writhe; while the dry voice, unheeding the interruption, went rasping on—

"And I thought, 'If that was Archie, now; and he'd be sure to get ten years beside.' Isn't he better off, though only a stable-helper—eh?"

"Weel, weel, what is't you want? I took this place, as you bade me, to be near the family; and I listened, when you hadn't told me, to what the dying man said, and found out, I fancy, something worth knowing."

"Ou, a trifle—a mere trifle. There's no fortune hanging to the name for the bairns. It's a name, and nothing more, if all's true that they have a right to it. It's of far more consequence to *you* to hide the past, whatever comes in the future."

"I have some money saved, Sandy. Be my friend: lend me enough for Archie—he's a'most broke down and done for—and let us go over the sea and die, out o' the way, in peace."

"That cannot be a while. No; you must stay a wee bit longer, till I see if I can get the money together."

"And I've told you all I heard, and got the marriage lines, and now you put me off again," she murmured, beginning to cry.

"What can I do? It's your deed that makes it so difficult to get things straight. How can I restore the children? Answer me that. No, no, Janet. You must be patient, for your own sake. Listen. I want you to give notice, and leave your place at the hotel, and look for a chance of hiring yourself at Austwick Chace. You'd not be so hard worked there, woman."

"Worked! it's all work. I must go," said she, roused by his last words to a sense of the swift-passing time.

"Yes, yes; but now listen. I'm trying to get something out of this Miss Austwick—something to cover my losses, Janet. She'll never own these bairns—not she. She'll pay money—money"—he sunk his voice into a hissing whisper, and involuntarily clutched his hands—"to have the secret kept. I know it, and you know it. For reasons of your own you cannot ever tell, that I know; but if I can keep her well in hand, madam must

pay for her pride. Let her get so far that she cannot go back, and your Australian trip and a bit of land at the end is safe for you and Archie."

"It's long in coming. Year after year I've waited, till I'm well nigh getting grey, Sandy."

"So much the better. Ye're so changed, ye'll never be known as the same, even if Mrs. Basil should by chance come—not you. Ye're bleached, face and all, Janet; so, that if my wife Maggie rose from her grave she would not know ye. It would do ye good, and keep off the wrinkles awhile, to live in a quiet place like the old Hall. I know there's a wedding coming off there. Old Gubbins told me so in a chat I had wi' him lately. They like staid women folk, and not young girls. Your forty year and odd will be no hindrance there—not it, any more than it was at the 'Royal Sturgeon.' It makes ye respectable like. You prepare to leave, so as to get a good name, and be ready, and I'll, maybe, find a way to give you a lift. There's many a way, more than masters and mistresses know of, to get into places; only, mind you this—all depends on my knowing what goes on with Miss Austwick. Keep your eyes open."

He looked at Janet's staring orbs, and added, "I mean, see with them, and tell me all that goes on. The little one is there now."

"What little one?"

"The lassie."

The woman's wide face and glassy eyes became more stony than ever, as she dropped her under-jaw and stood repeating, in a gutteral tone, from her throat the words—

"The lassie!"

"There, go home: Archie shall be safe, and your dreadful secret is buried with me. As soon as I recover my losses, and see my way straight, you shall go. I want you to go, poor Janet!"

The contemptuous pity with which he spoke seemed to add bitterness to the woman's feelings, for she suddenly turned round and said—

"Don't you pretend to pity me, or I shall hate you outright. I serve you, because I fear you; and you use me, because you cannot do without me."

"Well, I've no fear of you, that's one good thing, Janet. I fear nobody—not I. But I'll make some I know pay up, or wince before I've done with 'em."

As he spoke he screwed up his face into such a knot of ugliness, that Janet's wall eyes seemed to open wider with terror. She visibly shuddered, and, with a farewell sound, something between a groan and a sob, tramped off towards Southampton.

The man stood and watched her by the fitful light, until she was no longer visible; then he turned in the direction of his lodgings, muttering to himself—

"What's the use of keeping a raw on an old post-horse if you don't cut into it now and again?"

(To be continued.)